



## POLICY BRIEFING SERIES

### WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION FOR STATE LEGISLATORS

SUPPORTED BY: THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY LEADERSHIP ON AFTERSCHOOL CARE

*For most full-time employed parents, the gap between the end of the school day and the time they arrive home from work adds up to about 20 to 25 hours per week. Thus, many parents look to afterschool programs to satisfy their desire for safe, enriching experiences for their children while they are working.*

## WHAT IS AFTERSCHOOL CARE?

## Definition:

- “Afterschool” is the general term used to describe an array of safe, structured programs that provide children and youth with a range of supervised activities designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day. The terms “school-aged care,” “out-of-school time,” and “expanded learning opportunities” are sometimes used interchangeably.<sup>1</sup>
- Afterschool programs can include academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, homework help, arts, technology, science, reading, math, civic engagement and involvement, and activities to support and promote healthy social and emotional development.<sup>1</sup>
- Most afterschool programs run for about 2 to 3 hours per day, 4 to 5 days per week.<sup>1</sup>

## Quick Facts:

- More than 15 million school-age children (26%) are on their own after school.<sup>2</sup>
- Parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home.<sup>2</sup>
- About 6.5 million children and youth, in kindergarten through 12th grade, participate in afterschool programs nationwide.<sup>1</sup>
- But many more children are in need of access to afterschool care:

Working Families by Type	Percent of Non-Participants Who Participate in Afterschool Programs	Working Families by Type
Both parents work (67%)	26%	5.6 million
Single mom works (27%)	42%	3.4 million
Single dad works (6%)	34%	700,000
Total — all working families (100%)	31%	9.7 million

From: Afterschool Alliance: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press\\_archives/Working\\_Families\\_Rpt.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/Working_Families_Rpt.pdf)

## Why is afterschool care important?

- Recent studies indicate that students who regularly attend high-quality afterschool programs are more likely to be engaged in school and attentive in class than are children who do not attend such programs.<sup>3</sup>
- School engagement encompasses three areas:
  - 1) Behavioral: participation in school-related activities, involvement in academic and learning tasks, positive conduct, and absence of disruptive behaviors
  - 2) Emotional: relationships with teachers, peers, and academics
  - 3) Cognitive: investment in learning and willingness to go beyond basic requirements to master difficult skills.<sup>3</sup>
- In addition, results show that increased school engagement is especially strong for students who come from low-income families.

*“THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT MORE CHILDREN NEED—AND DON’T HAVE—AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS TODAY THAN FIVE YEARS AGO. TODAY IN OUR COUNTRY, TOO MANY PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO ENROLL THEIR KIDS IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS BECAUSE THEY’RE NOT AVAILABLE, TRANSPORTATION IS UNWORKABLE, OR THEY CAN’T AFFORD THE FEES. AS A NATION, WE NEED TO INCREASE OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP UP WITH THE RISING DEMAND AND MAKE SURE THAT AFTERSCHOOL IS AVAILABLE TO ALL CHILDREN WHO NEED IT. QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS KEEP KIDS SAFE, INSPIRE THEM TO LEARN, AND HELP WORKING FAMILIES.”*

— JODI GRANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE



## WHY IS AFTERSCHOOL CARE A POLICY MATTER?

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### **Working families want more afterschool options.**

- Over three-fourths of Americans (76%) agree that members of Congress and state and local elected officials should increase funding for afterschool programs.<sup>2</sup>
- Nine in 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school.<sup>2</sup>
- 67% of parents believe that there are not enough afterschool programs to meet the needs of their communities.<sup>4</sup>
- Nine in 10 parents (91%) agree that there should be some type of organized activity or place for children and teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn.<sup>2</sup>

### **Afterschool programs can support working families by keeping children and youth engaged and safe while parents work.**

- The hours from 3 to 6 p.m. present several potential hazards to a young person's development. These hours are associated with the peak time for juvenile crime and juvenile victimization and are the hours when teens ages 16–17 are most likely to be in or cause a car crash.<sup>1</sup>
- Based on a study of 2,000 high school students that looked at the relationship between afterschool supervision and sexual activity, the American Academy of Pediatrics found that 56% of youth surveyed reported being home for 4 or more hours unsupervised after school. Youth who were unsupervised for 30 or more hours per week were more likely to be sexually active than those who were left alone for 5 or fewer hours per week.<sup>1</sup>

### **Afterschool programs can support working families by promoting health and wellness among children.**

- Afterschool programs can contribute to healthy lifestyles and increased knowledge about nutrition and exercise.
- The Yale Study of Children's After School Time found that youth who participated in afterschool programs were more likely than nonparticipants to experience reductions in obesity. This was true even after controlling for initial body mass index at the beginning of the study, as well as for demographic factors such as poverty, race, and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

## USE AND AVAILABILITY OF AFTERSCHOOL CARE

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### **People who use afterschool care:**

- 8.4 million K–12 children (15%) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 18.5 million say that they would participate if a quality program were available in their community.<sup>2</sup>
- 25% of Asian, 24% of African American, 21% of Hispanic, and 16% of Native American children attend afterschool programs, compared to the national average of 15%. Yet 28% of African American, 21% of Hispanic, and 24% of both Asian and Native American children have no adult supervision after the school day ends.<sup>2</sup>
- While two in five parents overall (38%) would enroll their children in afterschool programs if they were available, 61% of African American, 51% of Native American, and 47% of Asian and Hispanic parents say they would.<sup>2</sup>

### **Coordinating services to meet young people's needs (and the needs of their families) can be done on a communitywide basis rather than on a program level, and efforts should span entire communities.**

- The Study of Promising After-School Programs has found that “when all parties with responsibilities for and interest in the welfare of youth, especially disadvantaged youth, unite to engage them in high quality after-school experiences, they are more likely to succeed in promoting positive development for the largest number of youth at risk.”<sup>5</sup>
- Parents cite the following barriers to enrolling children in afterschool programs: cost (52%), hours of operation (26%), and availability (27%).<sup>2</sup>

### **Funding is hard to get and keep:**

- Eight in 10 parents (83%) support public funding for afterschool programs.<sup>6</sup>
- A recent survey of 1,447 afterschool programs found that:
  - 95% of programs report that the recession is affecting their communities.
  - 6 in 10 afterschool programs report a loss of funding due to the recession.
  - 47.4% report that their budget is inadequate to meet the needs of students and families.
  - 62% report that funding is down from 2 years ago
  - 69% report that funding for the next 1 to 2 years is less secure than it has been in the past
  - 83% report that funding for the next 3 to 5 years is not secure.<sup>6</sup>

## HOW DOES AFTERSCHOOL CARE AFFECT BUSINESS?

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**When working parents are worried about what their children are doing after school, parents may experience "Parental After-School Stress."**

- Parental After-School Stress (PASS) symptoms include reduced concentration and lower productivity on the job. To decrease PASS, businesses can provide information about afterschool options, allow parents to monitor children's afterschool activities, or support community afterschool care programs (e.g., with technical assistance or resources)<sup>7</sup>
- Parents miss an average of 8 days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year.<sup>7</sup>

**The next generation of American workers will need more education and advanced skills to succeed in the modern workforce.**

- American businesses spend more than \$60 billion each year on training new employees, much of that on remedial reading, writing, and math.<sup>8</sup>

## STATE POLICY INITIATIVES

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**There have been surprisingly few state laws providing for afterschool programs.**

- 47 states have statutes relating to the provision and funding of afterschool programs.
- Several states have provisions providing transport to and from afterschool programs (including, CA, IL, NV, NH, RI, WV).
- Several states are participating in the 21st Century After School Program (including, CA, ME, VT, WV).
- Oklahoma has a law specifically tackling childhood obesity through innovative afterschool programs.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

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The Afterschool Alliance: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

- The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization that advocates for quality, affordable programs for all children through research and practice. The common goal of this agency and its supporters is to have all children easily access quality programs by the year 2010.

The National Child Care Information Center's Afterschool Investments Project: [www.nccic.org/afterschool](http://www.nccic.org/afterschool)

- This program hopes to develop and offer state profiles of afterschool resources, policies, and issues; create tools and materials to support the development and sustainability of afterschool efforts; and provide technical assistance at regional meetings around building state collaborations for afterschool. State-by-state comparisons and profiles are on the NCCIC website.

National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks: [www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net)

- Brings together 31 established statewide afterschool networks in their collaborative mission to build partnerships and policies that are committed to the development and sustainability of quality afterschool programs.

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The Sloan Work and Family Research Network can provide you with additional research-based information about working families. VISIT [WWW.BC.EDU/WFNETWORK](http://WWW.BC.EDU/WFNETWORK), EMAIL [WFNETWORK@BC.EDU](mailto:WFNETWORK@BC.EDU), OR CALL 617.552.1708.